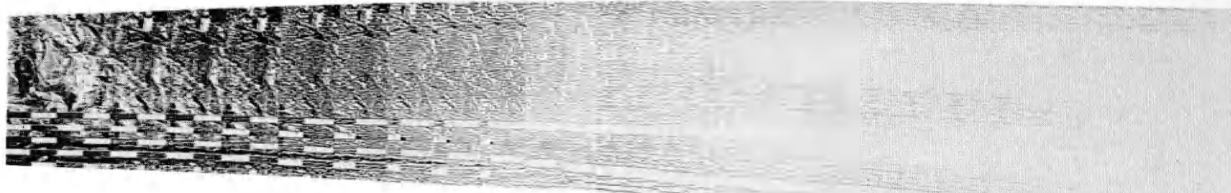




ROBERT BASSLER

**CLIFFWALL**  
METAMORPHOSIS  
OF AN IMAGE

LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY  
JANUARY 24 THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, 1981



CLIFFWALL TRANSFORMATION, 1978. 9 3/4 x 48" (24.8 x 122cm)

The source of the "Cliffwall/ Barricade" image is from a photographic series related to road symbols and their interaction with the environment.

While exploring various symbolic aspects of these images, I became increasingly possessed by the elusive and mysterious qualities of the Cliffwall. Once the decision was made to investigate the image through the orderly device of a grid, I realized that my curiosity was beginning to become an obsession.

The peculiar juxtaposition of the man-made wooden barrier, against the massive and overwhelming density of the granite cliffwall fascinated and challenged me. It was apparent early on that the challenge involved a need to transform this natural and symbolic barrier into something beyond what normal perceptions allow—something ethereal, consisting of light and an essence of matter—a glimmering presence...

Robert Bassler Nov. 1980



CLIFFWALL VARIATION I, 1980, 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)

In a recent conversation about his work, Robert Bassler discussed his current efforts to bring his relief sculptures off the wall, giving more emphasis to the third dimension, depth, in free-standing form. This exhibition is primarily a statement of the developmental processes of the artist's concerns and hence contains only two forms away from the wall. These forms gain their depth more from transparency and light than from solid structure.

Bassler describes the evolution of the process as follows: from a color slide of wood barriers in front of a cliff wall, he made Xerox prints. Making successive Xerox prints from the preceding print, the image gradually disintegrated into floating abstract shapes. These patterns were then transferred to large scale relief sculptures in which the original cliff barricade

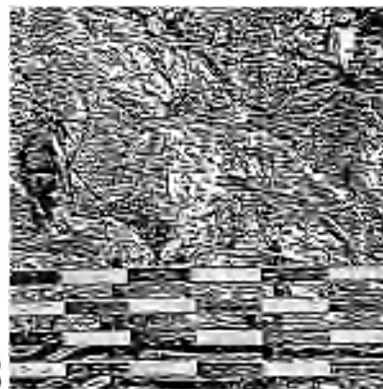
information gives way to abstract, decorative patterning. This information is also transferred to large graphite drawings in which tonalities of black or white change places in the figure/ground relationship.

Color, as it was originally seen in the slides and Xeroxes is not used in Bassler's large scale interpretations. Instead, according to the artist, light has become more important—hence the engraved Plexiglas images, in which translucency or transparency of the plastic serves as foil to the engraved patterns.

Bassler feels that this introduction of light as a sculptural tool can assist in his effort to take his work into a broader sculptural format.

While his latest work—the freely suspended, transparent sheets—does take the image off the wall and so what increases both the physical and psychological space of the pieces, it is clear that this developmental process is still going on for Bassler. As in his much earlier work, he again sees the transparency of plastic as a sculptural possibility. It will be interesting to observe in which direction Bassler will now take this focus on transparency in his renewed pursuit of a more spatial sculptural form.

  
Louise Lewis



CLIFFWALL GENERATION 20, 1978 (DETAIL)  
7 x 10 1/2" (17.8 x 27cm)

Visual artists absorb stimuli of all kinds—from any source—digest them and transform them into personal statements. Some do it primarily with color, others with form. We divide them according to such differences into painters, sculptors, photographers, not to be confused with video, performance and conceptual artists. It makes descriptive tasks easier—creates a sort of order for those who concern themselves with categories.

In my experience, however, I find that all real artists think conceptually and have at one time or another tried their hand at working in media they usually eschew.

So it might be better if instead of indulging in rigid definitions we simply stated that someone's interest was predominantly focused in this or that area.

Robert Bassler, known as a sculptor, has a long history of working with forms and light in wood, plastic and other materials. This has not kept him from experimenting with other expressive tools.

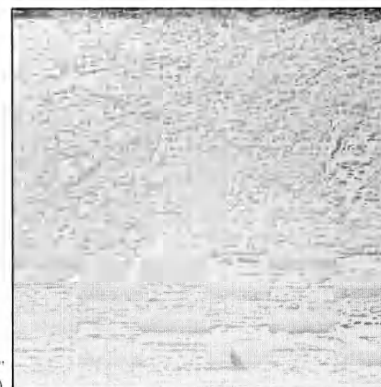
In this exhibition, we have jointly chosen to show works that sequentially follow the evolution of an image; its metamorphosis from color photograph broken down Xerographically, through successive generations into abstract, flowing forms. The emerging rhythmic patterns are then transferred from flat, graphic, marks into sculptural bas reliefs, and further into incised shapes routed onto transparent acrylic surfaces to be activated by light.

I have always been fascinated by the artists' thinking and investigative processes. For me this is, even more than the finished product, evidence of creation in action. In a time when all too many people value only the objects, we need to emphasize that the most important attribute of man is creativity—the process.

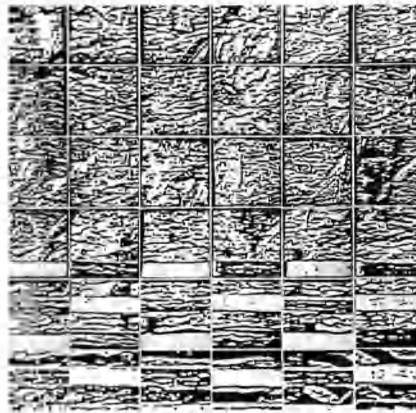
It is with great pleasure that we present this exhibition of Robert Bassler's works which attest to his ideas, and the inventiveness and skill with which he realized them.

*Josine Ianco Starrels*

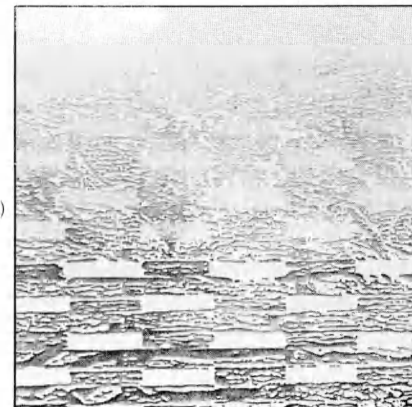
Josine Ianco Starrels  
Director, Los Angeles  
Municipal Art Gallery



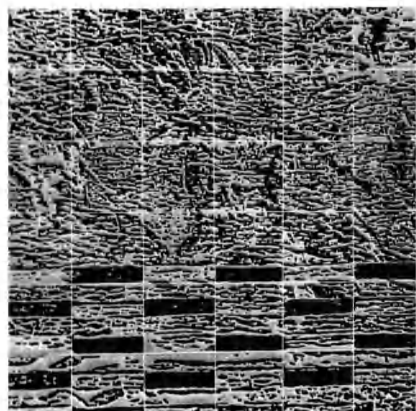
CLIFFWALL VARIATION III, 1980. 40 x 40"  
(101.6 x 101.6cm)



CLIFFWALL VARIATION II (GRID), 1979. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)

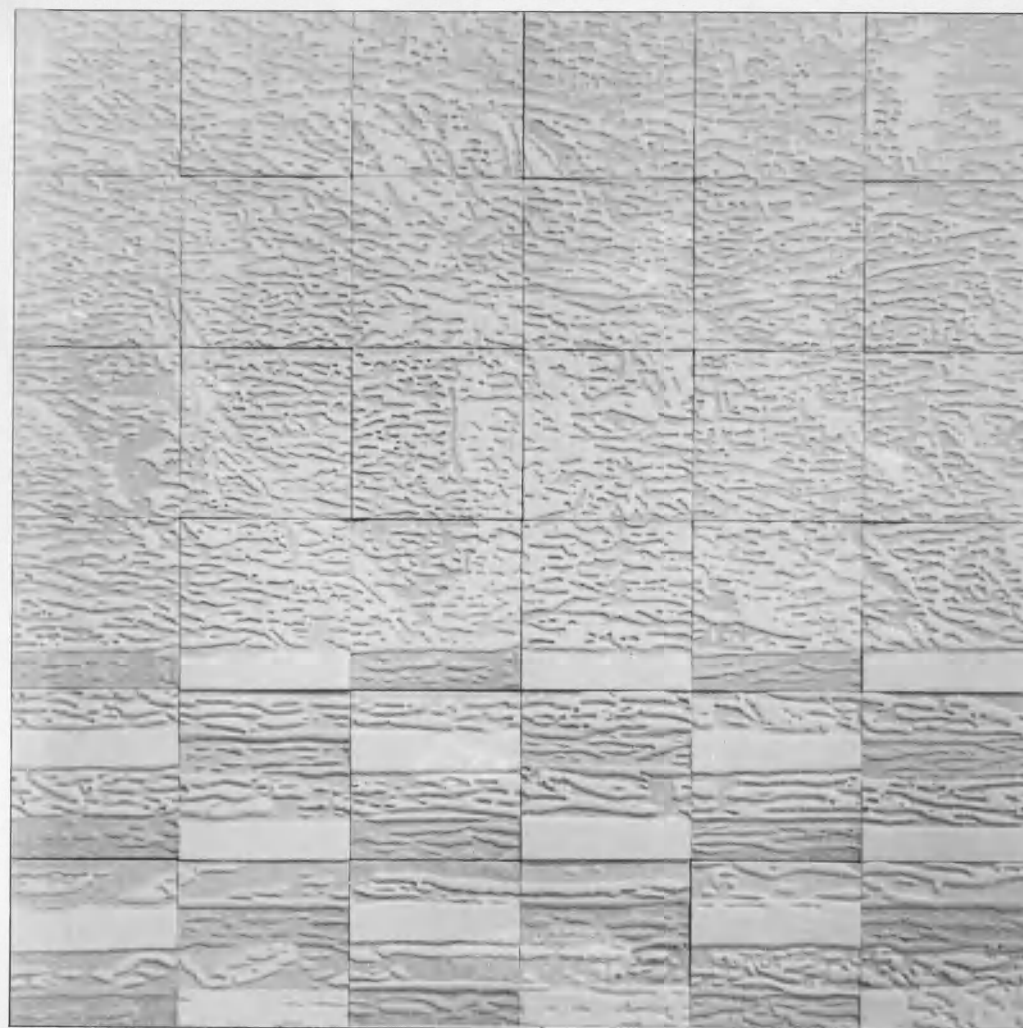


CLIFFWALL VARIATION IV (GHOST), 1980. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)

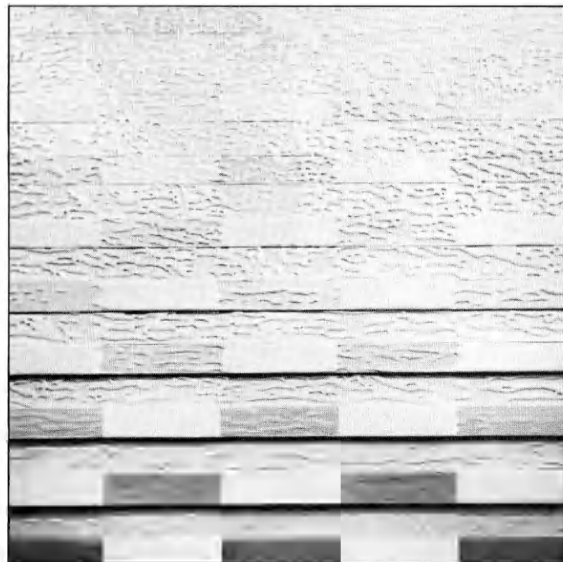


CLIFFWALL VARIATION V (BLACK I), 1980. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)

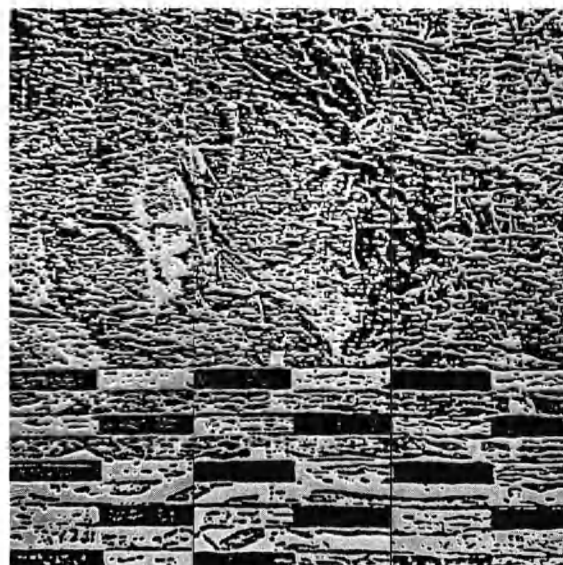




CLIFFWALL BARRICADE I, 1978. 120 x 120" (305 x 305cm)



CLIFFWALL BARRICADE II, 1979. 93¼ x 96" (236.8 x 244cm)



CLIFFWALL TRIPTYCH, 1980. 74¼ x 76¼" (188.5 x 193.7cm)





PHOTOGRAPH OF ROBERT BASSLER BY LYNN BASSLER, Fall, 1980.

## CATALOG

### WALL SCULPTURES

- |                                                            |                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| * 1. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE I<br>Particle board, Paint        | 120 x 120" (305 x 305cm)<br>1978  |
| * 2. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE II<br>Wood, Particle board, Paint | 93¼ x 96" (236.8 x 244cm)<br>1979 |

\* Represented in Catalog  
Dimensions: Height precedes width

### ACRYLIC RELIEFS

- |                                                      |                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * 3. CLIFFWALL VARIATION III<br>Insculpted Plexiglas | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980   |
| * 4. CLIFFWALL FRAGMENTS<br>Insculpted Plexiglas     | 24 x 24" (61 x 61cm)<br>1980         |
| * 5. CLIFFWALL TRIPTYCH<br>Insculpted Plexiglas      | 74¼ x 76¼" (188.5 x 193.7cm)<br>1980 |
| * 6. CLIFFWALL PANELS<br>Insculpted Plexiglas        | 72 x 79" (183 x 200.6cm)<br>1980-81  |

### DRAWINGS

- |                                                                 |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| * 7. CLIFFWALL VARIATION IV (GHOST)<br>Pencil, Paint on Paper   | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980 |
| * 8. CLIFFWALL VARIATION V (BLACK 1)<br>Pencil, Ink on Paper    | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980 |
| 9. CLIFFWALL VARIATION VI (WHITE 1)<br>Pencil, Paint on Paper   | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980 |
| 10. CLIFFWALL VARIATION VII (BLACK 2)<br>Pencil, Paint on Board | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980 |
| 11. CLIFFWALL LANDSCAPE FRAGMENTS<br>Prismacolor on Paper       | 6½ x 6½" (16.5 x 16.5cm)<br>1979   |

### PHOTOGRAPHS & XEROXES

- |                                                                     |                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 12. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE—SOURCE<br>Type "R" Color Print              | 6¼ x 9¼" (17.1 x 25.2cm)<br>1972      |
| * 13. CLIFFWALL—GENERATION 20<br>Color Xerox                        | 7 x 10½" (17.8 x 27cm)<br>1978        |
| 14. CLIFFWALL TRANSFORMATION<br>Color Xerox, 70 generation sequence | 9¼ x 48" (24.8 x 122cm)<br>1978       |
| * 15. CLIFFWALL VARIATION II (GRID)<br>Color Xerox                  | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1979    |
| * 16. CLIFFWALL VARIATION I<br>Black & White Photo                  | 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)<br>1980    |
| 17. CLIFFWALL SECTION I<br>Photo enlarged Xerox                     | 30 x 40" (76.2 x 101.6cm)<br>1978     |
| 18. THE ROADSHOW (Selection)<br>Type "R" Color Prints               | 2 5/16 x 3¼" (5.8 x 8.2cm)<br>1972-78 |



CLIFFWALL BARRICADE III, 1979. 72 x 72"  
Collection Carter, Hawley, Hale, Inc.  
(Not in Exhibition)



PHOTO BY LYNN BASSLER, Spring 1980.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1961-1963 Comara Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1961, 1970 Thorne Hall, Occidental College, Los Angeles
- 1964 Bakersfield College, Bakersfield
- 1965 California State University, Northridge
- 1965, 1981 Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
- 1968 Santa Barbara Museum of Art
- 1969 Molly Barnes Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1971 Baxter Art Galleries, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena
- 1972 Galerie La Demeure, Paris
- 1972 Amerika Haus, West Berlin

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arts Council of Great Britain  
 Atlantic Richfield Corporation  
 The Ahmanson Collection  
 Chicago Convention Center  
 Container Corporation of America  
 Carter, Hawley, Hale Stores, Inc.  
 Home Savings and Loan, Los Angeles  
 Central Savings and Loan, San Diego  
 Camarillo City Hall, Camarillo  
 Kadison, Pfaelzer, Woodward, Quinn & Rossi  
 California State University Northridge  
 University of Southern California  
 Bard College, New York

## BIOGRAPHY

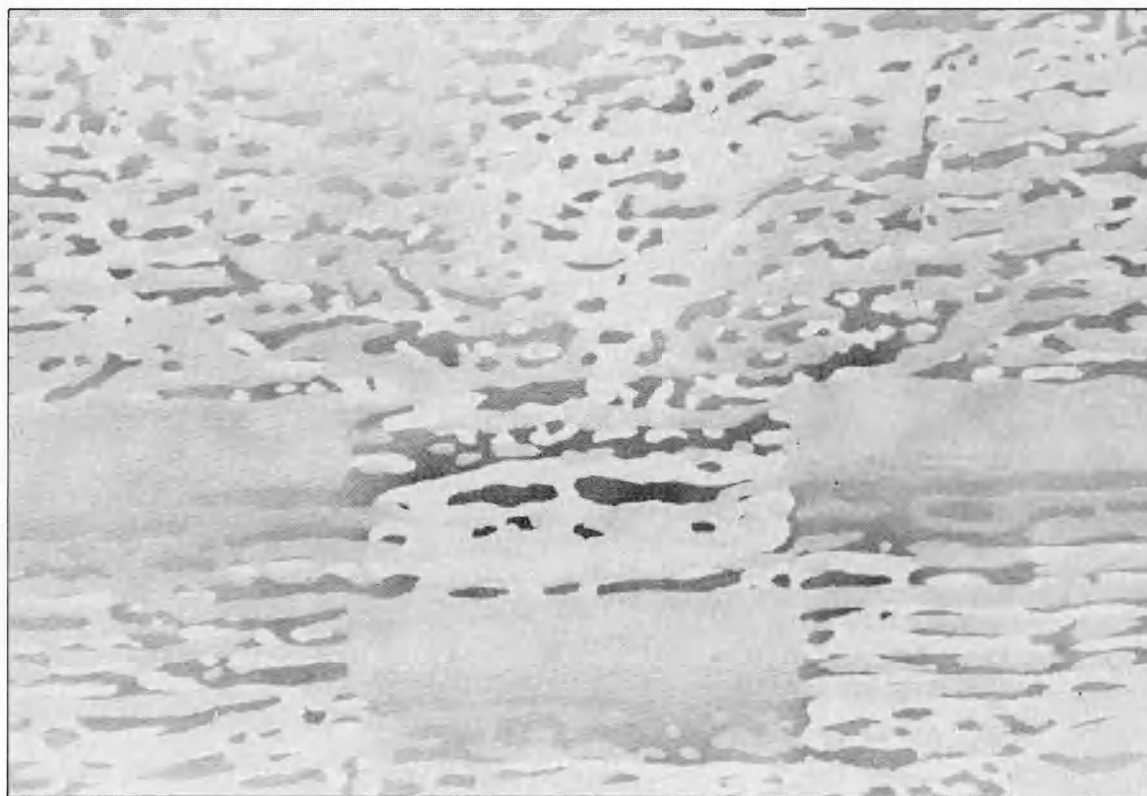
- Born: New York City, 1935  
 Resident of Northridge, California
- Education: Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1953-54  
 Bard College, New York, B.A. 1957  
 University of Southern California, M.F.A., 1960
- Positions: Professor, State University, Northridge, 1964-Present  
 Artist in Residence, Cal Tech, Pasadena, 1970-71  
 Instructor, Occidental College, Los Angeles, 1960-64

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
 San Diego Museum of Art  
 San Francisco Museum of Art  
 Oakland Museum of Art  
 Pasadena Museum of Art  
 La Jolla Museum of Art  
 Newport Museum of Art  
 Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art  
 Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery  
 Long Beach Museum  
 Downey Museum of Art  
 Conejo Valley Art Museum  
 Arts Park, Los Angeles  
 Century City  
 Milwaukee Art Center  
 The Jewish Museum  
 Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg  
 Ackland Memorial Art Center, Chapel Hill  
 Jacksonville Art Museum  
 Houston Museum of Art  
 Musée D'Art Moderne, Paris  
 American Embassy, London  
 Redfern Gallery, London  
 Comsky Gallery, Los Angeles  
 Comara Gallery, Los Angeles  
 Canyon Gallery, Los Angeles  
 Esther Bear Gallery, Santa Barbara  
 Joyce Hunsaker & Associates, Los Angeles  
 University of Southern California, Los Angeles  
 California State University, Los Angeles  
 California State University Northridge  
 Los Angeles Valley College  
 Pierce College, Woodland Hills  
 Pasadena City College, Pasadena  
 Antelope Valley College, Lancaster  
 Mount San Antonio College, Walnut  
 Occidental College, Los Angeles

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Gerald Nordland, Long Beach Museum of Art, 1962  
Art International "Los Angeles Letter" Jules Langsner, April 1961



DETAIL—CLIFFWALL VARIATION III, 1980.

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